

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Thomas Medical Products, Inc.

Delaware Valley Industrial Resource Center

Thomas Medical Products, Inc. Reaps Cost Savings with Lean Implementation

Client Profile:

Thomas Medical Products, Inc., a division of General Electric Healthcare, designs, develops and manufactures precision Class II and Class III single-use devices for original equipment manufacturer customers. The company focuses on catheter-based vascular access and vascular device delivery medical devices for diagnostic and therapeutic procedures in the cardiology, electrophysiology, radiology, vascular surgery, critical care and anesthesia medical device markets. Thomas Medical employs 160 people at its facility in Malvern, Pennsylvania. Its products are sold to customers in more than 20 countries.

Situation:

Thomas Medical Vice President of Operations Peter Rapp has always been a strong proponent of continuous improvement initiatives. Since joining the company, he had implemented a number of programs; however, he felt that a different model was needed to break through to higher levels of quality, compliance, cost control and productivity, and made the decision to explore Lean manufacturing methods. Rapp contacted the Delaware Valley Industrial Resource Center (DVIRC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance in implementing Lean methods.

Solution:

DVIRC conducted a cultural assessment, evaluated Thomas Medical operational methods, and created a Lean transformation plan. With assistance from DVIRC, management staff was introduced to Lean practices, and received training in team building and communications necessary for Lean success. Reward and recognition programs were put in place, and 5S (Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, Sustain) techniques were introduced, Value Stream Mapping (VSM) initiatives were implemented, and Kaizen events were held. "As employees became more engaged, we saw momentum build," notes Rapp. "They were excited by the results, and looked forward to the next Lean project." With DVIRC's assistance, Thomas Medical's more efficient work flow processes have enabled the company to build additional capacity.

Results:

- * Increased sales by 25 percent.
- * Realized savings of \$1.2 million.
- * Reduced cycle times from 12 weeks to 4 weeks.
- * Achieved a more competitive and profitable position.

Testimonial:

"To be successful with Lean, you have to take ownership. DVIRC gives you the tools and training to make it work. The collaborative nature of the DVIRC community is a real plus. It offers me the

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opportunity to go to other plants, share ideas and benchmark with other companies."
Peter Rapp, VP of Operations